

PRESS CONFERENCE:

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Chairman**

Colonel Robert J. Vasta, Commander, Gulf Region – Central Division

**Commander Usher Barnham, Iraq Transition Assistance Office, U.S. Department of
State**

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Division, Baghdad**

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TV, Baghdad Agency for Education, and Al Motawa[ph] Newspaper.**

REPORTERS 1-9

***REP1 = REPORTER 1**

***INT = INTERPRETER**

MR LANGER: Thank you very much for coming today. I'm Erich Langer. I'll serve as moderator today for our Arabic Media Press Conference Roundtable on Anbar Reconstruction/Anbar Security. The dust storms have been pretty bad lately. We had planned on visiting with you folks about two weeks ago but we couldn't get all the players together. So, fortunately, today we're able to make it happen. And I appreciate your flexibility in joining us today to learn a little bit more about Anbar. And again, we have some very good speakers today. They are going to be able to talk a little bit about security, a little bit about reconstruction, and then field your questions as well on where we are in Anbar. Again, we work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Gulf Region Division. And we're responsible for the reconstruction...a large component of the reconstruction in Iraq. And Colonel Vasta, who will speak shortly, will speak about some of the reconstruction efforts. Mr. Usher Barnham, who is with the State Department's ITAO office, will speak about some of the PRT programs and some of the other efforts that are underway with the State Department. And, of course, our featured speaker, Dr. Abdulsalam Abdula Asalam is going to speak from the perspective as the chairman of the PRDC from Anbar. And we're very, very fortunate to have him today. So let me just say a couple more brief words about him and I'd like to turn the floor over to him. You all know him, of course. He's a true patriot in Iraq. He's working with

the governor...with Governor Maamoun on trying to get the different coalitions working together, to get the tribes working together. He's just come back from a recent trip to the United States where he briefed U.S. leaders and also received briefings there as well. So a coalition builder, someone who's trying to help make a better place for everyone in Anbar. And I think a lot of the things that are going to be happening soon with PIC are responsible to men like him. So I'd like to turn the floor over to him and let him talk about Anbar reconstruction and Anbar security and whatever else you'd like to talk about, sir.

DR ABDULLAH: [Speaks in Arabic.]

INT: Thank you very much. In the name of God. Actually, Anbar Province...and everybody knows that it was the starting point of setting the first step in fighting terrorism and facing terrorism in Anbar Province. Anbar Province actually...in the periods, that is a year ago was...used to be...or used to be called the Iraqi Islamic State and they opposed the state of government and law in the government. And this infection also moved to several other places. And the people of Anbar Province stood up against those criminal members with the legislative authorities and the city council as well. Also, there was a support for the project of fighting terrorism by the Government of Iraq. After this stage, there was an urgent

need to honor the people of this province and...so that we could reward the members and the people that stood up against terrorism. Today we will talk about what the people of Anbar Province received regarding the services. The first allocations of money that were...according to the regional allocations that allocated for the regions, Anbar Province witnessed a vast reconstruction movement on the counties and areas. The problem that Anbar Province faces is that it represents one-third of Iraq's area. And it's a vast area and it has the cities that are separate and...or separated from...and it also has borders from three countries. And the borders were open for the past with those countries. And after the province reached this stage of reconstruction, and it's not up to the damage that happened to the province and this is due to the allocations of the central government depends...and the allocations of the GOI depends on the regional reconstruction based on the population of the province. That's why those allocations were not enough and did not meet the damage and the urgent need. And if we go through the important points that witnessed reconstruction, there has been a concentration by the provisional council and the divan of the Anbar Province to solve the problems that we see that are considered urgent like schools...education, that is. There was a concentration about health sector and...because there was a deterioration in the health sector and the projects. And we managed several...to build several health

clinics and centers which was equipped...those clinics were equipped with all medical supplies. And also projects for the potable water for the people, solving problems like removing the trashes and the sewage system, and also the bridges and the roads. However, all those things...still there is a huge shortage and there's still an urgent need for the province for other projects. The real problem...and the bigger problem is electricity which is a huge problem. Still there is...the minister of electricity is not responding to the demands of the provincial council despite that the ministry responded with other provinces in a better way. That's why the people in Anbar Province asked through the provincial Council to reach their voice to the Iraqi government so that the government could support the people in Anbar Province, especially in electricity. There is a coordination between...there was a coordination between us and the Army and the civilian authority by the PRT and the reconstruction. And there is coordination to set priorities about the projects. Yes, due to the tough security situation, the coordination was not good and some of the money was disbursed without consultation with the provincial council. In 2008 we have set a clear plan so that there will be an agreement on the priorities and the important projects that should be implemented that come through the allocations of the American Army or...of the civilian side, from the American government. Today we believe that

Anbar Province ha-...supported all the people and the sides and stated that it's an important component in Iraq. And Anbar Province, for the past time, always demanded to remove any sectarian ideas or ethnicity and terrorism and remove all those things from Iraqis. And Anbar Province also asked for unity for the entire Iraq and this is not only inside Iraq but there were also other demands and calls for the American government to...through the visits that...made by the delegation from Anbar Province to the United States. And we believe today that the state of law is clear. We all have started to witness that we are working together as Iraqis, away from all... towards the right objectives. But, still, there are some certain points that need to be sold. There are some sec-...groups from the Iraqi government...or the Iraqi people feel that they are still marginalized and some people are targeting them. This is what we need today to solve. And we should unite all Iraqis with all their groups and sides so that we could achieve security and stability in Iraq. Thank you.

MR LANGER: Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to remind everyone, too, that if you got a copy of the press packet that we've assembled for you, there is actually a magazine as well as the PowerPoint presentation you're getting ready to see from Colonel Vasta. It's in Arabic and so you can refer to that for notes and numbers and things of that nature.

And it also has some bios in there. Next, of course, is Colonel Vasta. And Colonel Vasta is our Gulf Region Central Division commander. He falls on...we have three different districts: central, north, and south. And he's our central district commander. And the district includes Baghdad, which is quite a large area and lots of projects, and Anbar, a very, very important area and that's what our focus is today. Colonel Vasta comes to us...he's a West Point graduate. He is an engineer. He's got master's and bachelor's degrees as well. And his complete bio is in your folder if you'd like to refer to that. But I think we'd like to turn it over to Colonel Vasta and let him talk a little bit about some of the work in the different, major sectors going on in Anbar and maybe a little look at the future. Colonel Vasta.

COL VASTA: Thank you very much. Good afternoon. As-Salāmu `Alaykum. I'd like to first mention to you how very, very happy I am to have this opportunity to talk to you about what I think is a very exciting amount of work that we're doing in Anbar Province. We've been doing reconstruction activities for several years. And in the past year we've been able to grow that program quite a bit because of the great improvements in security and that is a very positive outcome. You'll notice on the first slide that we have partners in reconstruction and that is a key point. The building of a facility is a

very complex process and requires the coordination and planning from many different organizations. And I am happy to tell you that the coordination that is occurring between the coalition forces and the Iraqi government has never been better in Anbar Province. We are able to successfully coordinate and plan projects within the Gulf Region Division, working closely with the Marines as well as the State Department and with the Iraqi government at the central government level with the ministries, the provincial council, and then down at the city level as well. So all of those organizations work together very closely so that the projects that we come up with to do and then execute are the right projects, at the right time, and the right place. And the more that we work together, the more that this process and this coordination and partnership has improved. And it's wonderful to be part of that process. Next slide, please. This shows an overview of the last year for projects that GRD has had a hand in. As you can see, 135 projects that represents almost one-third of a billion dollars worth of effort. And you can also see that most of those projects have been completed in the past year. But I'm happy to tell you that even within the last two weeks we've awarded another dozen projects, mostly schools, within Anbar Province that will be new construction. So that's a very, very positive way ahead and we continue to be proud to be part of this reconstruction effort. Now you notice that the slide breaks down the

information by sector. And what I'll do is highlight just a few projects in each of those sectors as I go through the next several slides. Next slide, please. The first area I'd like to talk about is security. And perhaps the most important project that we are working on in Anbar Province is tied to the security sector. And in particular it is the Rule of Law Complex that we are constructing at Hurricane Point, just outside of Ramadi. This is a very large project – over \$20 million – and will provide the Rule of Law Complex and the Center of Law for the entire Anbar Province. It's very, very critical. It involves a rebuilding of several existing structures as well as creating living areas for the judges and the staff that will work in this complex. We'll also address the infrastructure – the electricity, water, and so on – to make sure that everyone there has the needs of their...their basic needs met as they execute the rule of law within Anbar Province. Next slide, please. Electricity, as Dr. Abdullah mentioned, is a critical area for everyone in Iraq and in particular in Anbar Province. Electrical projects are done at different levels. There is the central grid, and the projects that support that are power generation and power transmission. So this first slide talks about some transmission work that we've been involved in. We are very, very near to finishing a very, very large transmission project that has the 400 kV lines in Qa'im, Haditha, and Baiji linking together. We're down to just the last few towers that will have to go up to

finish this project. And it's very exciting for us because we've been working very hard on this one for quite awhile and we're very near completion. Next slide, please. Distribution and transmission...or, excuse me, distribution is probably the part of the electrical process that touches the individuals of towns and communities most closely because that's the part of electrical work that actually brings the power to houses. And we have a number of very important projects going on within Anbar Province. In particular, solar streetlights. We finished one phase of that some time ago. And if you've taken a walk down the streets of Fallujah recently, you've seen the evidence of a fabulous bit of construction work. We've begun, just recently, a second phase of this solar light project and that will create an additional, large number of solar lights within the city. A very, very valuable and effective source of light for the city that does not drain and draw power from the national grid. Another area dealing with distribution is a transformer that we're doing within the Fallujah area, another project that is moving along quite well and will be done sometime within the near future. Next slide, please. Within the area of sewage – which is certainly not a fun area to talk about, but certainly an area that we need to do construction on – Fallujah has the largest wastewater treatment system project going on in the entire province. This is very, very important. Fallujah has not had a consolidated wastewater treatment system within the city in its past.

And this \$85 million project, which has many, many different elements, is going to produce a capability to handle the entire city's wastewater treatment needs. The plant we're putting in is actually a four-train plant. Currently, the city can be supported by just two of those trains, two elements of this wastewater treatment plant. And what the plant offers is for growth of the city, an ability to grow the plant to meet the needs of the city well into the future. Next slide, please. On the side of producing water, another critical area for the people of Anbar Province, I've highlighted a water treatment system that is very near completion in Fallujah. Now, again, this is a system that has many parts that we're working on. But just recently, the Askari Water Treatment Plant itself was highlighted in an open house by the mayor of Fallujah. This particular part of the project is almost complete and is a great example of what happens when you have increased security in an area and you are able to do construction without very much interference from anything at all. It's a wonderful change for the province. Next slide, please. In the area of health and education, we've done quite a few projects over the past year, and we have quite a few that are beginning. On the health side, you see an example of the Jamira PHC, public health clinic, within Fallujah. And this project is completed and seeing patients today. It's a very important part of the health system for the city of Fallujah. We also have another PHC in Fallujah at An Nazal

that was also completed back in October of 2007. But the area where we're doing the most work is schools. And, of course, the education of the children of this country is very important for the future. Just within the last several weeks we've awarded new contracts to build an additional dozen schools in the Anbar Province. Next slide, please. The final area that I'll mention is the transportation area, and our work in the transportation area has been primarily for the railroad. We've done a wonderful project in Fallujah that includes the renovation and construction of housing for the rail workers that will have responsibility to run the new Iraqi railroad station that we've completed renovating just recently. It is a fabulous effort by the construction contractor. And if you have an opportunity, I would suggest that you go and take a look at this wonderful project. Very, very well done. And the City of Fallujah will have a model rail station, perhaps the best-looking rail station in the entire country. Next slide, please. Finally, I'd like to highlight again that the partnership that we have with the other members of the reconstruction team is the absolute key to our success. Every partner in that team has a key role. And with all of us working together, we are able to do these marvelous projects that help to build the infrastructure of Iraq and to help take care of the people of Iraq. That's possible, of course, because of the improvements in security. And I think that it is impossible to emphasize how

important that has been for the reconstruction efforts. A combination of work by coalition forces and the Iraqi security forces have done marvels within Anbar Province. Safety is a very important issue for us as we do construction. There are many dangerous things that are done during a construction of a facility. And as part of our effort to help protect the people of Anbar Province, we've begun doing a combination effort with the city government of Fallujah to put out information so that individuals will know the dangers both of electrocution and of what we call confined spaces dealing with the wastewater treatment systems, manholes. Both of those are very dangerous areas and we've had great cooperation from the City of Fallujah to put information out in many ways to the public so that they can avoid those dangers. Reconstruction in itself is a very important thing. And it's important for a number of reasons. First, of course, the capabilities that are provided help improve the quality of life for the people of the city, the town, the region. But it also provides several other benefits. First, every time we have a construction project ongoing there is money that's going into the Iraqi economy, and that's a very important thing. People have jobs. Many, many construction jobs are generated by these projects. And that's an important thing. And finally, the effect that it has in reinforcing the security improvements in the province also come out for every single

reconstruction project that's done. I'd like to thank you very much for this opportunity to speak to you today.

MR LANGER: Thank you, Colonel Vasta. I'd just like everyone to know that Colonel Vasta's tour is ending very soon. Actually, we were afraid we might not be able to conduct this press conference with him because of his tour length coming in very shortly, in the next week or so. It's very, very important for us to be able to explain the different reconstruction efforts that are underway for the Iraqi people. And I think it's really, really important since overall, the Gulf Region Division, which is just one sector of construction, has over 4,000 completed projects out there in all the different areas. So reconstruction is a very essential part of rebuilding Iraq. Our next guest is Lieuten-...is a commander in the Navy. He's not wearing his uniform today, but he's got a nice blue blazer on so he looks perfect for the part. Commander Usher Barnham joins us from the Iraq Transition Assistance Office, ITAO, which is a division of the State Department, the Department of State. And he is a PRDC program manager, provincial development reconstruction council manager. And he's here for a short time also. He's been here about 11 months now. When he goes back to the United States, he'll go back to San Diego. But he's here today to talk a little bit more about what the State Department's role is in rolling all this up together,

and what the PRDCs do and how we can work a little closer together. Kind of cement the whole thing together for us. What do you think, Usher?

MR BARNHAM: Well, thank you. And, again, on behalf of the Iraq Transition Assistance Office and the Department of State, I want to thank you for the opportunity to come and speak with you today. I also want to echo some of the things that were said earlier this afternoon about coordination, both with our Iraqi friends in Anbar Province and with Gulf Region Central. The provincial reconstruction development committee program that I run is a program that really is about cooperation. As we go through the list of priorities that are set by the provincial council and the provincial reconstruction development committee in al Anbar Province, we work together with your people in province as well as the State Department teams in province to bring those projects to reality. And the way we do that is we coordinate the type of project, we look at what the project is supposed to deliver for the people of Anbar Province, and then we partner with the Gulf Region Division and Gulf Region Central and the Army Corps of Engineers to actually execute those projects in the cities and throughout the province. So we are certainly a part of not only bringing coordination between the Department of State and the Army Corps of Engineers and providing the financing for

these projects, but ensuring that out in the province in the PRTs that we are building capacity. And, hopefully, for the future the one thing that we want to make sure that we focus on as we go forward is our master planning and regional planning for Anbar Province and throughout the essential sectors. So again, I want to thank you for the opportunity to come and meet with you today, and I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

MR LANGER: That concludes this portion of our roundtable press conference. What we'll do next is we'll field questions. We've got microphones on both sides of the aisle. I do want to emphasize that this is an Arabic-Iraqi Media Press Conference and so we are deferring to our Iraqi and Arabic media. Afterwards, if we have enough time we will take questions from Western media. But our guests have also agreed to spend a little bit of time one on one with you afterwards as well for any one-on-one questions. So that's available as well. So all I ask is that you present...give your name, your organization, and who you'd like to direct the question to, and we'll take it from there. Do we have a hand over here? Yes, sir.

REP1: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT: Question to Dr. Abdulsalam. You have talked about education and you have talked about health, and you are an expert in those things.

What is the percentage of progress that you've seen in Anbar Province regarding the education and health? And is it true that in Anbar Province now there is...or there are security problems in Anbar Province? And the other question to...the...from the Multi-National Forces and you also control Baghdad and Anbar, do you have any interest for the tourism in Iraq and to work on tourism? Because terrorism...tourism in Iraq is deteriorating. And it's...and we still...we don't have any tourist locations. Is there any interest to rehabilitate the hotels in Baghdad and to raise the tourism in Baghdad?

DR ABDULLAH: [Speaks in Arabic.]

INT: Well, I will give you examples and realistic examples. You have asked about education and health. Let me give you two examples. One of them is about the schools. In Anbar Province we have achieved, for the past half...one year and one-half, 123 schools from the allocations of the province. And only 9 schools have been achieved from the allocations of the Ministry of Education. As for the students and...which is the practical and the outcome in An-.... The University of Anbar this year witnessed 99% attendance from the students and...because they came and attended the examinations in Anbar University. And I used to be a professor at the university and the University of Anbar was closed for three months. And the

difference that you can see is actually the progress. The problem now that we still witness is raising the level of services in the province that could contribute in bringing back the good members and good staff that used to be present in Anbar Province. And we promised to people in Anbar Province to bring them back because we promised to raise the level of services and the economic level in Anbar Province. And that's why the percentage of progress is 80%. That is including the education and health. As for the health, we have achieved 43 health centers from the allocations of the regional. And we have built one of the best hospitals and one of the biggest hospitals in Anbar Province. And it was built during the past one year and one-half in Fallujah. And it will be an example and a role model for the hospitals in Iraq because the companies that built this hospital took several privileges from the Ministry of Health. As for the security situation, we think that terrorism is not...or has only one thing is to kill himself to carry out an operation. As to go target any side inside the province, terrorists cannot do that unless they kill themselves or hire other people to conduct their terrorist attacks in Anbar Province or suicide attacks that Anbar Province has still witnessed such violations from time to time. And hopefully that the coming weeks we will see an elimination for those...for all those suicide attacks.

INT: There was a question about tourism in Iraq, but I'm not sure the...to whom it was the question. Question about tourism in Iraq and raising the level of tourism and rehabilitating the hotels as happening in Kurdistan Province.

REP1: [Repeats question in Arabic.]

INT: Regarding the tourism, is there any interest in tourism in Baghdad? Because most of the delegations go to Kurdistan and you are supervising several projects. Don't you think that rehabilitating hotels and also taking care of tourism in general is an important thing in Baghdad and Anbar Province?

COL VASTA: I'm understanding that the question is directed to me, sir? The projects that we're currently performing, both in Baghdad and in Anbar Province, are focused on the basic infrastructure needs of the country and are not directed toward the area of tourism.

DR ABDULLAH: [Speaks in Arabic.]

INT: Regarding the tourism, we have...our next press conference will also cover some certain points and we have also coordinated with the Ministry of Tourism so that we work on the Habbaniya City which is a spa for all the Iraqis and in Baghdad, and the only place that the Iraqis could visit. We have made a good progress in

rehabilitating the Habbaniya Island. But I think that there are some certain aspects that still need...we still need to work on and it will be a really pleasant place that people will go as tourists. And, as you've mentioned, conferences and other activities will also be held in such places. And we also have projects for the...to build hotels. And Marriott Company is also working on establishing and building some hotels there.

REP2: [Speaks in Arabic.]

INT: Al-Iraq Newspaper. Doctor...question to Dr. Abdulsalam. As you are the chairman of the provisional...provincial council of Anbar, there was a concentration about Fallujah City, and you neglected talking about the industry of oil and the [unintelligible] in Akashat area. And those resources is...are important things to find job opportunities for the unemployed and to raise the economic level in the province. So what is...what do you have any...do you have any update regarding this so that you can raise the economic level in Anbar Province? Paving the streets does not mean that you've made a progress, but building a factory means that there is a progress. And also agriculture in Shamiyah and Jazeera area. There is negligence for that. And so have you reached any solutions regarding this? Thank you.

DR ABDULLAH: [Speaks in Arabic.]

INT: Thank you. Well finding job opportunities and also eliminating unemployment, we can say that we have a slogan that says the youth is the problem...or the solution. And I think that finding...and we were able to eliminating the unemployment and we...find...we eliminate...we are working on eliminating the unemployments and to find job opportunities for the unemployed personnel. And this is due to the projects that we have. This is for the employment and providing job opportunities that we need for the youth. The other thing is that in Fallujah City and why we concentrated on Fallujah is that because the American forces and the American administration and that is due to the military operations and the invasion that happened in Fallujah. And that...this is why it was part of what we wanted to rectify what happened, the reconstruction. As for Anbar Province, we deal with the province and we treat all the cities on equal footing, but we'll have also priorities to the cities. And after 2006 we started to set priorities for every city. As for raising the economic level and I've said we have provided urgent services in the province for the past half...year and one-half. And now we have a strategic plan to raise the level of the economy in the province. The major projects that we know that are important, like the glass project that provides job opportunities for 3,400 people, the gas project that you are aspiring

to happen and all Iraqis aspire to have. And we have allocated good money from the Ministry of Industry. And I think the ministry has a plan, and it was as a part of the agreement of the government to have allocations from the ministry to the government. And we talked with the central government so that there will be a development for those projects before making any investment as they want to do. And the Ministry of...the minister has allocated 20 million dinars to...for the glass factory in Ramadi. And another 20 million for the factory of phosphate in Al Qa'im area which hires 7,000 personnel. And we are still making talks with the Ministry of Oil. And we always say that the Ministry of Oil is still working slowly and has a lagging process in helping the province and there should be a coordination with the province so that we could achieve good things in the province. Thank you.

REP3: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT: Dr. Abdullah. Anbar Province was supposed to receive the security responsibility and it didn't happen due to the weather. Do you have any vision when it will...Anbar Province receive or take over security responsibility? And do you think it's ready to hand...to take over the security? Because there are...people are afraid around some disputes that could take place between the tribals. And also to Colonel Vasta. When President Bush visited Anbar Province and he

met with officials there, he stressed the importance of reconstructing this project so that it will be a role model for the other provinces in Iraq. And honestly, do you think that what you've achieved in reconstruction in...has lived up to what the president wanted?

DR ABDULLAH: [Speaks in Arabic.]

INT: Well, you've asked about the security responsibility and we were...we used to...or the security responsibility was used to...was supposed to happen this week, but the real reason is that there was a bad atmosphere and the weather was not good. And everybody knows that this is still continuing until today and delaying it. And people ask why it was delayed. And when you talk about taking over the security responsibility, there should be a presence by the Iraqi government so that people will not say that this province will be an independent and work on its own. So we want to guarantee that all the presence...the presence of the Government of Iraq officials and also officials from the coalition forces. Yes, the province is ready and...to take over the security responsibility. And taking over the security responsibility is an Iraqi demand and it happens also in all provinces. And the people in Anbar Province want that. But still there is a need for the security services to have support in equipping and arming in addition to training. And this

thing still is not at the level that we aspire and still there is a lagging process in the...from the Iraqi government to work on this. But there is a delay even in hiring the police director according to the constitution. And we went...so there is a lagging process to hire some officials and...that we demanded from the Iraqi parliament. So there are some certain issues about this. The other question, yes. It is supposed to be this week, but still, you know that the weather is still difficult and officials could not make it there. But hopefully by the end of this week it is possible that we could witness a security transfer.

MR LANGER: On success in Anbar and whether it is meeting the goals of MNF-I.

COL VASTA: Thank you very much for the question. I recall as well when General Bush...or President Bush visited Anbar Province. And I do believe that the work we are doing in Anbar Province does meet the intent of his statements, that we are helping to fulfill the reconstruction needs within the Anbar Province. I talked about all the different sectors where we have projects ongoing. And, in fact, the many projects that we are just beginning that will continue to add additional infrastructure for Anbar Province. I think it's a great success story. Thank you.

MR LANGER: I think also part of the issue there, too, is that construction wasn't allowed to happen for quite awhile until the security situation had gotten better. But once the security situation was...is improved, then reconstruction could improve. So you've seen more success in reconstruction over the last year or 18 months. Next question? Right there, in the blue shirt.

REP4: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT: Al-Masakala Agency. Dr. Abdulsalam. Question. You've talked about the water problems and projects. Since 2006, there was a water pump...or water station in al-Habbaniya area. And until now this water station has not been established or built. And we talked about those who work there at present said that we need more allocations. And so what is your comment about this?

DR ABDULLAH: [Speaks in Arabic.]

INT: Well, actually, we have 35 projects on the water aspect in Anbar Province. The projects that you've talked about, yes, we do have problems with it regarding the reconstruction in Ba-...in Anbar because there were more than one side working on reconstruction and there were no coordination in the past. And that's why I've mentioned...in the beginning I said that at the past we didn't witness a good coordination in the reconstruction. But after we have

set good and clear plans that there should be coordination so that we could surpass such problems and delay in achieving some projects. This project could not...may not receive allocations from the province, but we will address this problem because it was not presented for the provincial council and there could be other sides that are interfering from conducting the project. But the American forces also agreed on not conducting any projects without even...unless that we set the priorities for the projects and also allocating the locations where the projects will be achieved.

REP5: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT: Dr. Abdulsalam. Question from al-Fayha TV. You know that Anbar Province is a really large province and has a security situation. And do you think that the member of the security services and numbers is enough to handover the security responsibility in Anbar Province? Do you think that the number is enough to take over the security?

DR ABDULLAH: [Speaks in Arabic.]

INT: Well, we had a problem in the number of the police. And the government promised that they would...to meet the need. And this shortage is that those members work in police and they volunteered for the past six or seven months. And the government promised to

solve this problem and to give allocations and job opportunities for further people. And I think that the number, according to the police that is, is enough. As for the Army, no. We still have a shortage in the number of the Army because there are some large and vast areas. If we wanted to control the border, for instance, and the border patrols and...will have a really positive role in providing stability in Anbar Province and Iraq, of course.

REP6: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT: Dr. Abdulsalam. Question. Anbar Province is.... [Unintelligible] from Baghdad Agency for Education. You've talked about reconstruction and security, schools and health clinics. And Anbar Province is...we know that you've never talked about building a university or a hospital that live up to or to what Anbar Province deserves. So...and the other question is what is your role in building the universities or hospitals? The other question is to Mr. Barnham. As a representative from the U.S. Department of State, what is the support that the Department of State did? What kind of support have you done or have the ministry...or the department did for the Anbar Province?

DR ABDULLAH: [Speaks in Arabic.]

INT: Well, we didn't talk about all the details...the reconstruction details,

but we didn't mention all the aspects and details. And Anbar Province...we used to have one university in Anbar, in Ramadi. And now we have a university in Fallujah. And we'll be finished soon, that is...and we will...and the university was approved. And in a short time, there will be other projects and we'll finish other projects on three universities: on the law schools and veterinarian schools and.... And in addition...and shortly there will be another college for the pharmacy. As for the hospitals, I've mentioned at the beginning that we built one of the biggest and one of the best hospitals in Anbar Province and in...and it is in Fallujah City. And we have presented a project to build two hospitals in Anbar Province, one in Haditha and one in Qa'im area that is 300 kilometers away from Ramadi. But still there is a delay in implementing those projects that should be approved by the Ministry of Health.

MR BARNHAM: Yes, the Department of State, through the provincial reconstruction and development committee program is supporting Anbar Province in the field of health by building a number of PHCs. In addition, in health we recently approved the renovation of the current Haditha General Hospital. I had an opportunity to go out to Haditha and walk through the site and look at the amount of damage that was done during the attack on the hospital. And the Department of State

is putting some \$5 million into the renovation of that project. In addition, there are 13 schools that have recently been approved for Al Anbar Province by the Department of State totaling some \$18 million worth of U.S. funds for the support of the people and the essential services in Haditha and throughout Al Anbar Province. I've heard a lot of people talk this evening and get questions about what we're able to bring to the table in support of the people. One thing that I am reminded of that was said by our late president, John F. Kennedy, was, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." And one thing that we are hoping to do is partner with all of you in making sure that Anbar Province can grow to be that shining success story that our president talked about and that I know in your own hearts that you would like it to be to make your province and this country flourish and prosper. Thank you.

MR LANGER: Up in the front row.

REP7: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT: Ahmed Jassem. Al-Arabiya Newspaper. We today talk about the Anbar Province and how much interest has been allocated. And also visiting...the visit made by President Bush is also a good example for that. And recently you've also met with President Bush at the

White House. What have you talked about between you and President Bush? Have you talked about reconstruction? Could you tell us what you have talked about?

DR ABDULLAH: [Speaks in Arabic.]

INT: Well, thank you. I think this is what all Iraqis deserve, that is the reconstruction and what is going on. Because everybody's convinced that there should be a standing up for the terrorism. And actually President Bush and when he visited Anbar Province, we talked about...and he talked about several topics and one of them is that how to make Anbar Province a role model. When we visited...on our first visit to the United States, which was a delegation from Anbar Province, we had presented a work draft of making Anbar as a model for Iraq. This paperwork included 13 points that is how to raise Iraq, how...on the same method that Anbar stood up against terrorism. And during the first visit [which] was at the end of October and it was for two weeks. This recent visit was through an Iraqi delegation from Anbar Province. We coordinated for this visit and we have asked the previous visit to exert efforts by all Iraqis to...by all Sunnis and Shi'ites and Kurds, that is all the nationalities in Iraq. In our visit we have also presented the work paper what had...and it had eight points. We concentrated on the sovereignty of Iraq like when it has to do with

the security agreement. And we talked about the unity of Iraq and the stability of Iraq. And also we talked about the good relationship between the people of Iraq and the people of America. We talked about fighting corruption in the security forces. We talked about the immigrants and also the displaced people. And we talked...and we said that the United Nations should also have a good role in this. And we met with the ambassador of the...the American ambassador at the United Nation, Zalmay Khalilzad, and we talked about activating the constitution and encouraging the political sides in...to reach some accord. Because this agreement and accord could be reflected on providing the services and also raising the economic level. There were several points. And in general, [we] talked about raising the Iraqi level and how much the American government could help Iraq because the United States has a good influence in Iraq through its good strategy with the other countries in the region.

REP8: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT: Al Motawa[ph] Newspaper. I have two questions. One for Dr. Abdulsalam and the other for the colonel. Dr. Abdulsalam, regarding the security situation in Anbar Province, you know that Anbar Province is really a large province and a big one and it has borders with three countries. And if we talk about those three countries and we know that terrorists...there is a flow of armed men

and terrorists from those countries. The provincial...is there any coordination with the security services? What have you...what the provinces have done about this topic, like in An-...? Yes. The other question to Colonel Vasta. What is the role of the GRD in...with the security forces and the Multi-National Forces to control the borders? And, as I've said, there are three countries...we have borders with three countries. Is there any progress in the cross points, for instance? And are you working on putting some checkpoints? What is the role of the GRD in the borders?

DR ABDULLAH: [Speaks in Arabic.]

INT: Well, actually, the...when we say that the pr-...the...I've said that still there is a need inside the province so that we will have a security transfer in a really good way that could eliminate any violations...terrorist violations. As for the provincial council, we haven't issued any resolution to approve the security responsibility because this topic was not presented to the provincial council and it's a constitutional and a legal thing. That's why we think that taking the security responsibility...taking over the security responsibility in an illegal way in the provinces...which states that the provincial council is the one that sets and monitors with the police directorate the security plan. That's why we think that this decision is up to the security services and not to the provincial

council.

MR LANGER: Colonel Vasta.

COL VASTA: Yes. Thank you very much for the question about what GRD will be doing as part of their role to support the border control. In the past in Anbar Province, GRD has completed a number of projects that support security of the borders. In fact, we were responsible for building 27 border posts, 3 ports of entry...3 points of entry, several border roads. And we are currently and in the future doing additional work to support the Iraqi security forces, building facilities to support both the Iraqi police and the Iraqi Army. In fact, we have several projects ongoing right now in Anbar Province to support both the Army and the police for the Iraqi government.

MR LANGER: I just want to point you out on the map over there, too, if everyone can see it, with the green and yellow and red dots. The green dots indicate completed projects. And you can look and see the dots along the border with Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Jordan. And those represent the border forts or border control points that Colonel Vasta was talking about. Most of those were completed before Colonel Vasta was here, but it is part of the total GRD program. Another question?

REP9: [Asks question in Arabic.]

INT: Dasan[ph] Ajabri[ph] from Baghdad Newspaper. Question to Dr. Abdulsalam. As you are the chairman of the provincial council in Anbar, I would like to...from you to clarify about the displaced families including the families...and me and my family were displaced from Anbar Province. And I have a property in Anbar Province and we still haven't been able to return to that house. What is the role of the provincial council in bringing back the displaced families? And is there any instructions about this? And the other question regarding the electricity. In spite of the fact that you've disbursed a lot of money and we have seen this, but why we don't have good...special allocations to be disbursed on electricity alone?

DR ABDULLAH: [Speaks in Arabic.]

INT: Well, I promise you that you can go back to Anbar Province. And let me tell you that we have adopted a project for the past year regarding bringing back the displaced families. But still...we still have psychological reactions from the Iraqis; not only from the people in Anbar Province but even in Baghdad and in other provinces. The psychological situation for the Iraqis doesn't help them to go back to those places. Yes, Iraqis do have right because

they still concerned...they are still concerned about the operations and everyone is afraid of those things. That's why we have adopted a project to bring back the displaced families. And I think that, at this moment, there isn't any property and I guarantee that. And I can tell you that there isn't any property that is occupied illegally by other people, whether it was for the Sunnis or Shi'ites. And I guarantee this for you. And you can...we have actually invited the media. And we have said that anyone who has a need...any displaced person should also send an e-mail or...to say that...give us an idea about the problems that...so that we could help them as the local government...as a local government. And hopefully the media will show this for all the people and all the Iraqis that left their homes in Anbar Province or properties in Anbar Province. And we promise that we will support them and we will bring them back to their province. The other question regarding the electricity, I'll give you an answer and I think the colonel could provide another part of the answer. Is that I've talked...we have a problem with the Ministry of Int-...of Electricity. We have said that two-third of the allocations of the...were provided to be disbursed on the electricity so that.... But the Ministry of Electricity did not approve on those suggestion of the two-thirds...or from allocating two-thirds of the allocations and the budget. I don't know if the colonel would like to add anything.

MR LANGER: Colonel Vasta, would you just like to briefly approach the electricity issue as far as the complex nature of how it all comes together and sometimes doesn't all come together?

COL VASTA: Yes, sir. Thank you very much, Erich. Just briefly, the electrical grid in Iraq is a very, obviously, complex system. And as I'm sure it's no surprise to anyone, there's a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done on that system. That work will take some time. And although many projects are ongoing – projects that the U.S. government has sponsored, projects that the Iraqi government has sponsored – many projects going on all over the country, it will still take a considerable amount of time for all of those to be done so that the Iraqi electrical grid works well for everyone.

MR LANGER: That's going to have to be our last question. We've approached our hour mark. But I'd encourage you to stay afterwards. Our guests have agreed to do some one-on-one interviews if anyone would like to do that. And we have this room for probably another 30 minutes or so. Again, thank you very much for coming today. Later this month, actually in July, we are going to have a roundtable on Basra reconstruction and our partners there. And also we will be addressing the water issue in Iraq and different projects within the

Government of Iraq and also within the coalition as far as what programs are underway. So give the guys a chance to take off their microphones and we'll work with you on some one on ones. Thank you again for coming.